

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES JUNE 9, 2003

The minutes of this meeting are being produced with the caveat that with the absence of a quorum no official business was conducted at this meeting and provides a description of the discussion that took place only.

The meeting of the Commission was called to order by Vice-Chair Darrel Fournier at 1:09 P.M. at the Maine Emergency Medical Services conference room in Augusta with the following members present: Jeff Cammack, Darrel Fournier, Al Godfrey, Jeff Maker, Harty Norris, Jethro Pease, Leslie Wiles and Steve Willis. Members excused were: Michael Albert, Jay Bradshaw, Bruce Bryant, Tom Bull, Bob Duplessie, Richard Nass and Dave Wacker. Members absent were: Jack Berry, John Cannon, Art Cleaves, John Dean, and Ted Johnston. Guest present: Vicki Schmidt from MFT&E.

The minutes of the March 3, 2003 commission meeting were still not available due to Susan Pinette's absence due to illness. The minutes of the meetings of March 3, 2003, April 7, 2003 and June 9, 2003 will be discussed and approved at the next meeting.

The annual election of officers was again postponed due to the lack of a quorum.

Vice-Chair Darrel Fournier advised that the Commission had forwarded the names of Senators Bruce Bryant and Richard Nass to the Governor's Office for appointment to the Commission and the Governor has appointed them. There is still a House seat open that will be filled shortly. New legislation has been enacted and signed as an emergency measure by the Governor and now Jay Bradshaw is representing the State EMS Office and Art Cleaves is representing the State MEMA Office on the Commission. By moving Jay Bradshaw from representing the Governor to representing the State EMS Office a seat is opened up and former Senator Bill O'Gara has been nominated to fill that position.

Steve Willis reported that a small group met this morning on the training facilities issues. The data has been analyzed by Vicki Schmidt and a number of breakdowns have been presented. Most of the data validated what we had believed all along. The committee was surprised at the number of hours of training reported in some areas and were pleasantly surprised with the hours reported. The sample size is 185 departments which gives us a margin of error of approximately 3 %.

Darrel Fournier then reported that he had spoken this morning with John Martin, the legislative liaison for the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, and apparently the legislative leadership for both the Republicans and Democrats have said they will find funding for a bill to study retirement issues for public safety officials in the state. This is good news. A study group will be formed to look at police, fire and EMS and come up with recommendations to address these issues that are one of our goals. A general discussion ensued whether we could make sure health care is included in the issues.

The acting Chair thanked Jay Bradshaw and John Dean for traveling to Presque Isle a couple of Saturdays ago to attend the burial service for Commissioner Randy Keep and Jay played the bagpipes during the ceremony.

It was reported that an Insurance Industry representative has not been named yet replacing Randy Keep and that should be taking place in the near future.

The Commission has the responsibility to study the red light issue and siren issue for response of volunteer and call firefighters and a committee should be named to start working on this. It was determined that this should wait until this comes forward from the Transportation Committee.

A general discussion around the incoming funding from the Dept. of Homeland Security ensued with concerns that the local fire departments need to be vigilant in attempting to acquire funding for their operations before it gets sucked up elsewhere.

A concern was expressed as to whether the Commission's annual report had been published and forwarded to the Legislature as required. No one seemed to know if this had been done and Darrel Fournier advised he would contact Susan Pinette tomorrow to make sure that it had been.

Darrel Fournier brought up the issue that we had talked about last fall about holding a Fire Service Symposium in the spring with the Commission hosting it in Augusta. We didn't pull it off and he questioned if we still wanted to do something like this. It was concluded that if we could get some outside help maybe we could do it. The spring is extremely busy with the legislature so we need to work around them. We will keep this in mind and discuss it at the next meeting.

Steve Willis reported on all of the cuts that will be required at Maine Fire Training and Education and the Fire Marshal Office now that the special fire tax assessment will expire on June 30. Tough times are ahead.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on Monday, August 4, 2003 at 1:00 P.M. at the headquarters of Maine Emergency Medical Services on Edison Drive in Augusta. The Training Facilities Committee will meet that morning at the same place at 10:00 A.M.

With no further business to come before the Commission the meeting adjourned at 1:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Albert L. Godfrey, Sr., P.E.
Secretary